![VHA INNOVATION Ecosystem logo]

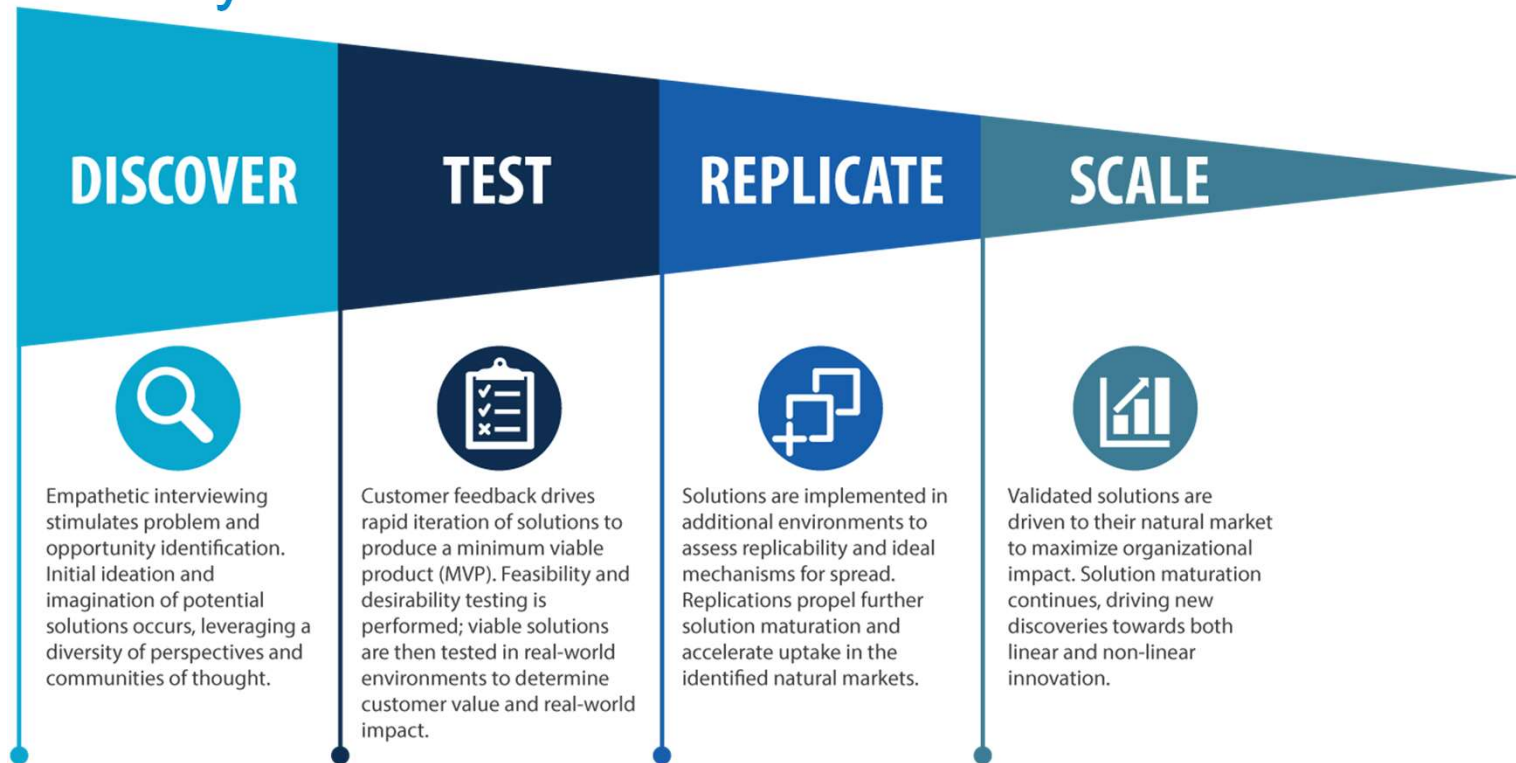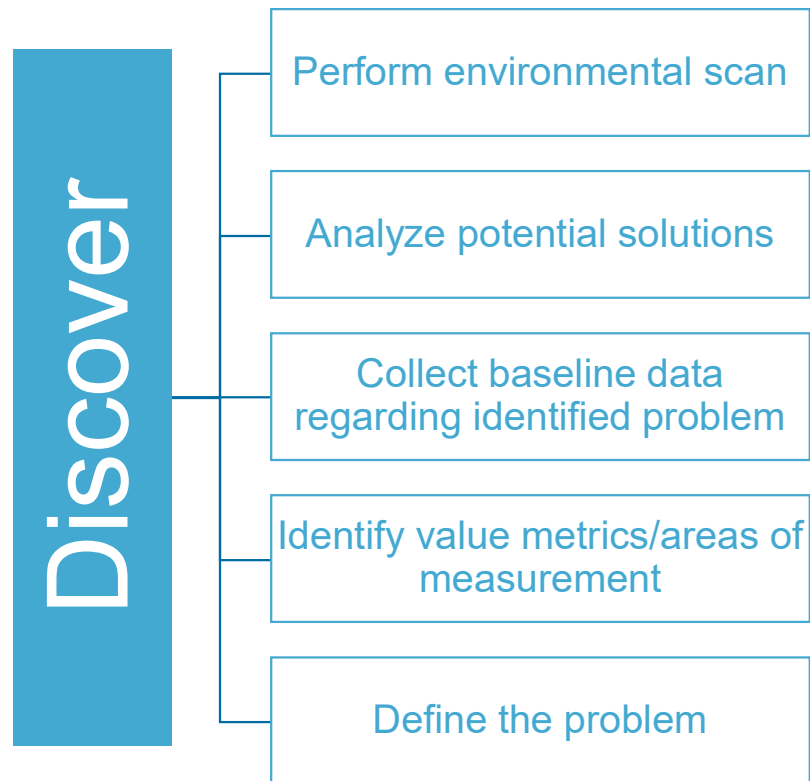# VHA Innovation Ecosystem

Operational Model

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

The Operational Model Provides a Structured and Repeatable Process for Managing Innovation across the Entire Lifecycle

DISCOVER

Empathetic interviewing stimulates problem and opportunity identification. Initial ideation and imagination of potential solutions occurs, leveraging a diversity of perspectives and communities of thought.

TEST

Customer feedback drives rapid iteration of solutions to produce a minimum viable product (MVP). Feasibility and desirability testing is performed; viable solutions are then tested in real-world environments to determine customer value and real-world impact.

REPLICATE

Solutions are implemented in additional environments to assess replicability and ideal mechanisms for spread. Replications propel further solution maturation and accelerate uptake in the identified natural markets.

SCALE

Validated solutions are driven to their natural market to maximize organizational impact. Solution maturation continues, driving new discoveries towards both linear and non-linear innovation.

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The Discover Phase Focuses on Initial Problem Exploration and Ideation

Discover

- Perform environmental scan
- Analyze potential solutions
- Collect baseline data regarding identified problem
- Identify value metrics/areas of measurement
- Define the problem

Traits for Phase Completion:

- Proposed Solution to Identified Problem
- Defined Metrics to Assess Value-based Impact
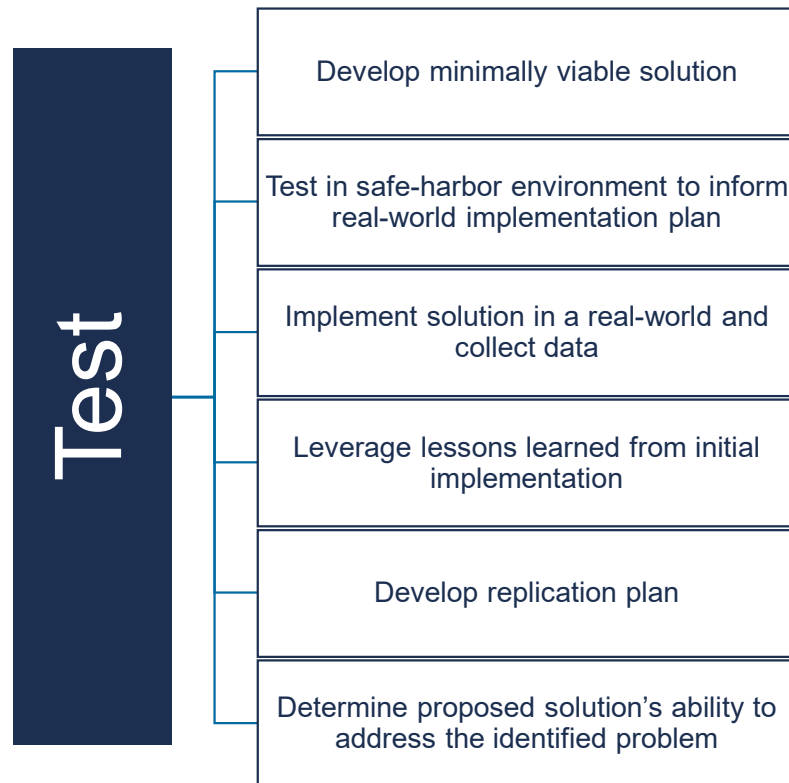- Defined Initial Community of Engagement

Community of Engagement:

- Local/regional/national stakeholders (support)
- End users/target customers (input/feedback)

Guiding Questions:

- What is the problem and how can it be solved?
- Is this a problem worth solving to improve patient services?
- Have user groups been identified and interviewed regarding their experience with the target problem?

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The Test Phase Refines the Innovation and Evaluates the Innovation's Real-world Impact and Feasibility

Test

- Develop minimally viable solution
- Test in safe-harbor environment to inform real-world implementation plan
- Implement solution in a real-world and collect data
- Leverage lessons learned from initial implementation
- Develop replication plan
- Determine proposed solution's ability to address the identified problem

Traits for Phase Completion:
- Successfully implemented solution in at least 1 real-world environment
- Demonstrated data-based improvements in value areas (3 month minimum)
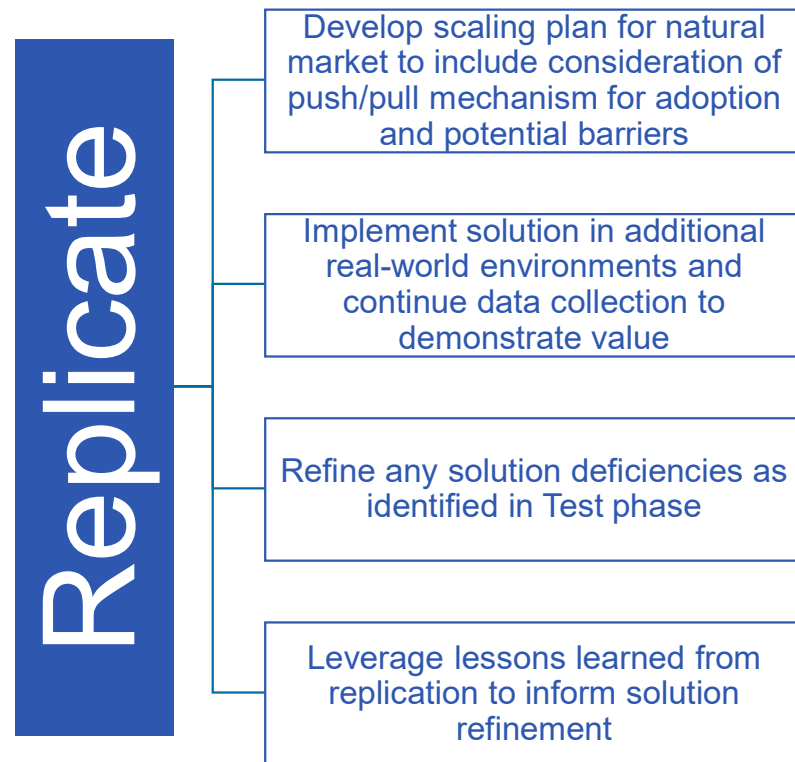- Replication plan

Community of Engagement:
- Local/regional/national stakeholders (support)
- End users/target customers (input/feedback)
- PoCs at initial implementation sites and prospective replication sites

Guiding Questions:
- Is the innovation feasible in a test environment?
- Have all necessary inputs and supporting resources been identified?
- Has user feedback been incorporated?
- Does the solution demonstrate positive impact during implementation in a real-world setting?

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The Replicate Phase Demonstrates Feasibility Across Multiple Environments and Defines the Natural Market

Replicate

- Develop scaling plan for natural market to include consideration of push/pull mechanism for adoption and potential barriers

- Implement solution in additional real-world environments and continue data collection to demonstrate value

- Refine any solution deficiencies as identified in Test phase

- Leverage lessons learned from replication to inform solution refinement

Traits for Phase Completion:
- Successfully implemented the solution in multiple real-world environments
- Demonstrated data-based success in value areas across multiple real-world environments
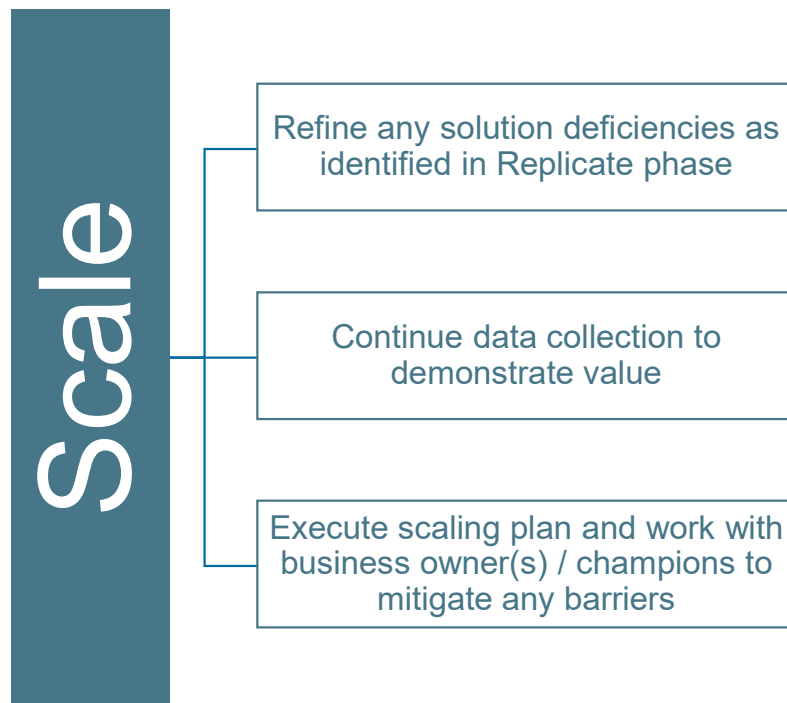- Scaling plan, with national stakeholder sponsorship

Community of Engagement:
- Local/regional stakeholders (support)
- End users/target customers (input/feedback)
- National stakeholder (sponsorship)
- Community of champions (advocacy)
- PoCs at prospective scaling sites (buy-in)

Guiding Questions:
- Does the solution replicate impact in new settings?
- What additional resources and inputs are needed to tailor the solution for future settings?
- Has an assessment been completed to determine all eligible implementation sites and level of scale?

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The Scale Phase Diffuses the Innovation to the Entire Natural Market

Scale

Refine any solution deficiencies as identified in Replicate phase

Continue data collection to demonstrate value

Execute scaling plan and work with business owner(s) / champions to mitigate any barriers

Traits for Phase Advancement:
- Diffused solution across natural market with data-based success in value areas
- Long-term sustainment plan
- Transitioned responsibility for sustainment to business owner(s)

Community of Engagement:
- Business owner/national stakeholder (sponsorship)
- Community of champions (advocacy)
- PoCs at scaling sites (buy in)
- Executive Leadership (inform/support)

Guiding Questions:
- Has the solution been scaled to include all eligible implementation sites?
- Have processes been established to customize the solution's implementation at each site?
- Have long-term sustainability plans been developed to respond to environmental changes?

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Innovators are Provided with Repeatable Methodologies, Tools, and Templates Across the Operational Model

	DISCOVER	TEST	REPLICATE	SCALE
	Empathetic interviewing drives problem and opportunity identification. Initial ideation and imagination of potential solutions occurs, leveraging a diversity of perspectives and communities of thought.	Customer feedback drives rapid iteration of solutions to produce a minimum viable product (MVP). Feasibility and desirability testing is performed, viable solutions are then tested in real-world environments to determine customer value and real-world impact.	Solutions are implemented in additional environments to assess replicability and ideal mechanism for spread. Replications drive further solution maturation and speed uptake in identified natural market.	Validated solutions are driven to their natural market to maximize organizational impact. Solution maturation continues, driving new discoveries towards both linear and non-linear innovation.
Methodologies	• Human Centered Design • Solution Assessments • Three-box Solution	• Human Centered Design • Lean Start-up Theory	• Implementation Science • Project Management	• Enterprise Governance • Business Ownership (PMO)
Tools & Templates	• Problem Curation • SMART Objectives And Goals • Environmental Scan • Metrics and Measurement Plan • Project Charter • Risk Assessment • Project Plan	• Stakeholder Assessment • Data Collection Plan • Standard Operating Procedures • Project Schedule • Communication Plan • Replication Plan • Lessons Learned Action Plan	• Procurement Plan • Scaling Plan • Marketing Plan • Stakeholder Engagement Plan • Lessons Learned Action Plan • Business Case	• Business Sponsor Engagement Plan • Transition Plan • Project Closeout Report

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